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* 776 According to the general Bella Coola belief the supernatural ones may be classified as anthropomorphic beings, zoomorphic beings, and supernatural members of the vegetable and mineral kingdoms.

ANTHROPOMORPHIC BEINGS

The Bella Coola agree that the most important of their supernatural beings is *Älquntäm*, the supreme deity, maker of men and animals. He is most commonly known by this name but he has other appellations with reference to his various functions. The word *Älquntäm* is said to be derived from *ɯxquntäm*, "foreman," or "chief." He is chief of the supernatural beings. Other names by which he is known are as follows:

Sunxälotla, a word derived from *sunx*, the Sun. This term is used almost as commonly as *Älquntäm*.

* 776 538 *Smaiaikila*, "The Story Man," because *Älquntäm* created the ancestral myths at the same time that he created mankind. The supreme deity is called *Smaiaikila* with reference to his membership in the *kusiut* society of the supernatural beings.

Smaialotla, "From Whom Come, and To Whom Belong, All Myths." As creator of the highly valued myths, the supreme deity is owner of them.

* 776 *Snusälkäls*, "The Wise One," "The Thoughtful," or "The One with Great Mental Ability."

[601] *Mänakais*, a word supposedly derived from *män*, "Father," with the suffix *kais* as a term of endearment. This is used in praying to *Älquntäm*.

[601] [782] *Täiä*, "Father," the term for father used by a child; this, like the last, is used in prayer.

Ixälqoläm.

Nenodjenostem, "The Adviser."

Silkmsta.

Nuyakmältsaix, "The Light Giver."

O-klok di Stälkuny, "The Moon Chief."

These names are not meaningless synonyms; all, or at any

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rate most of them, are carefully used in accordance with the functions of this supreme deity. As a Bella Coola has many names, corresponding to his membership in various societies, his professional prerogatives, his ancestral myths, and mere nicknames, so has *Ălquntăm*, who is a superman, many names, according to his special functions. It would be unthinkable for a Bella Coola to pray to *Ălquntăm*, yet it is common for him to pray to *Mɪnakais* or *Tătă*, other names for the same being. The multiplicity of functions and designations approaches the point of obscuring the unity of *Ălquntăm*, which in fact, some Bella Coola even deny. They state that *Sɪnxălotla*, *Mɪnakais*, *Smaialotla*, and *Nuχɪkmălsaix* are one, but that *Ălquntăm*, *Snusɪlkăls*, and *Nonodjonostem* are three distinct supernatural beings. This seeming confusion presents no difficulties to the Indian, since each family has its own myths in which such facts are recorded. He believes these, without questioning those of his neighbour, and it is even possible for an individual to believe two contradictory statements, if he happens to become the owner of two contradictory myths. Evidence collected in the field does not make clear whether the beliefs of the Bella Coola illustrate an incomplete transformation of a single deity into a number of minor ones, or whether they represent the almost complete fusion of a number of beings into one. Following the practice of the great majority of the Bella Coola, the supreme deity will be referred to as *Ălquntăm*.

The most obvious attribute of *Ălquntăm* is connected with the sun. He can enter it and use it as if it were his canoe. In form he resembles a man, and when he takes charge of the sun it appears as if the latter were a large, self-propelling, radiant boat with windows through which he looks forth. It is said that long ago he allowed mink to take charge of the sun, but the malicious animal ran it so close to earth that the intense heat killed almost all living creatures. When *Ălquntăm* enters the sun he wears a cloak, on the lining of which are salmon; reversing this causes the rivers on earth to teem with salmon.

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772 what is probably a moosehide, with salmon painted on it,
* 776 symbolic of his guardianship of fish for the benefit of mankind. In other respects *Nusmāt·a* has no peculiarities. Behind the house is an enormous tree, *Txɛnxɛn·iaqim*, in the branches of which live innumerable owls.

* 776 After this description of *Nusmāt·a*, it is logical to return
[821] to its master, *Ălquntăm*. Guiding the sun is his most spectacular occupation, but he also governs the movements of moon and tides. Powerful though he is, he continues to take an
● [782] interest in the doings of mankind whom he created. Prayers are commonly addressed to him, and a certain type of shaman is believed to receive power direct from him. Other supernatural beings may work weal or woe to a Bella Coola, but he feels it is done with the sanction of *Ălquntăm*. At every winter solstice he enters *Nusmāt·a*, where supernatural beings from all parts of the universe have gathered to greet him. This assembly is called *qulxwaix*, and *Nusmāt·a* is termed *Nusqulxwaista*[1] for its duration. While waiting, the guests perform *kusiut* dances, similar to those carried out by members of the *kusiut* society on earth (see vol. II, chap. 1). At *Ălquntăm*'s entry the heat becomes so intense that the occupants rush forth precipitately, some falling and being trampled upon in the crush. Only three[2] advisers, including *Sɛxɛxălaix* (I, p. 41), remain to confer with him. They arrange the fate of human beings during the coming year; who shall be made a *kusiut*, who shall be born, who shall die. In each case the decision rests with *Ălquntăm*, though he is influenced by his counsellors.
[787] Human beings can often learn in dreams what is being decided for them.

538 *Ălquntăm*, in spite of his strength, shares the limitations
* 776 of any other chief, and is not invariably successful. The Bella Coola delight in telling stories of how supernatural beings, especially the Raven, outwitted and defeated him. Even

[1] Often pronounced *Nuqsulwaista*.
[2] The exact number is uncertain.

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the top. He concluded that this must be the home of the woman. Before the door of her house, wherever it may be, there are miniature totem-poles which open their painted mouths and speak in the voice of the animal or bird portrayed. The writer did not hear that her home was in the land above *Nusmāt·a*, as Boas (p. 28) states. At the present time knowledge of *Kāmai·ts* is so scanty that failure to confirm the previous observation is not surprising.

One or two passing remarks of elderly informants imply that *Kāmai·ts* may once have been more important to Bella Coola belief than she is now. One old man, already in his dotage, stated that long ago the dead used to dwell in her house. Another declared that long ago prayers were addressed to her, which is never done now. The word *kāmai·ts* is commonly used by the Bella Coola in a manner difficult to translate. It serves as equivalent for "please" or "thank you," but has an underlying significance of a supernatural benison or appeal. It is not a word to be used in casual conversation; it is reserved for important occasions or times of emotional stress. The comparative unimportance of *Kāmai·ts* probably rests on the fact that she belongs merely to the realm of ancient history and has no sociological significance, even as the patron of a *kusiut* dancer.

Another supernatural being so far removed from this world that he enters but little into the lives of the Bella Coola, is *Snініа*. He is the male being whom *Ălquntăm* sent down from above in the beginning of time to hold the earth in position, and who has since performed this duty. He lives among the ice of the far north, and has not been seen by mortals for many generations. He holds a rope fastened to the earth; when he is afraid that it has slipped slightly he takes a new grip and pulls the rope taut, pressing the world against the soles of his feet as he sits with legs extended, as a man would do to hold tight a kicking salmon. It is the tightening of the rope which causes an earthquake. If *Snініа* should lose his grip entirely the earth would capsize. He is patron for several *kusiut* dancers.

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below. These are termed tally posts." Each remained upright as long as the individual to whom it referred was alive, but fell at his death. Since that time, whenever *Alquntăm* lends to a mortal *sininits*, the undefined power that causes life, his supernatural artisans erect in the land above a tally post for the new-born infant, marked with the bird or animal used by an ancestor. As long as this remains upright and straight, firmly fixed to the ground, its owner continues to be strong and prosperous, and has success in all his undertakings; if it becomes loose, or is crooked, he ceases to succeed. Prosperity does not depend upon the activities of an individual, but upon his supernatural possessions, spirit, tally post, and a third to be described later. If the tally post tilts far from the perpendicular, its owner becomes ill, and can be cured only by straightening it. In some cases *Alquntăm* is kind enough to do this if placated by prayer and ceremonial chastity (I, p. 110), and in olden days, shamans were occasionally able to penetrate to the land above for this purpose. Even when a post was reached, they were sometimes unable to set it upright, though they could always estimate the length of a man's life from its angle of inclination. In one of the *kusiut* dances, the performer pretends to have the ability to go aloft and the uninitiated are deceived by the erection of a tall ladder up which he climbs and disappears (II, p. 202). On his return, he reports the condition of the tally posts of various people. This performance serves to remind both members of the society and uninitiated of the existence of these supernatural elements, and of the dependence of individuals on them for success in life. In spite of this ritual, actual knowledge of the powers and functions of tally posts has been derived only from the first Bella Coola who, created in the land above, were acquainted with the mysteries of life and transmitted such lore to their descendants. One old man expressed the opinion

[773] [777] [753] [782] [755] [575]

"Qualmuts. One of the names of *Nusqa'a*, *Nusqualmuts*, refers to them, meaning, "The Place of the Tally Posts." *Qualmuts* and *qualmuts* are closely associated; sometimes the latter is pronounced *kualmuts*, although this may be an error in recording.

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THE WASH-BASIN

A third supernatural element which must be in good condition if a Bella Coola is to prosper in life, is a *nusḵelusta*, wash-basin. In the land above, *Ălquntām* has a large one filled with water which, having been constructed by himself, is replete with power. When a child is born, a small part of this receptacle, with its contents, is reserved for him; the supernatural artisans choose the actual section, but it is *Ălquntām* who gives them the ability to do so. A fortunate man, whose ventures are successful and to whom goods are attracted, is said to have a good wash-basin; whereas the ill-luck of an unfortunate person is attributed, among other reasons, to the small size of his supernatural vessel. The Bella Coola have no clear ideas about the connection between an individual and his wash-basin. Some state that it remains in the land above; others believe that its intangible essence comes to a child at birth and grows up with him, always near his body, as if it were the offspring of the basin in the land above. As long as it remains in motion the owner continues in good health and prosperity, but if it becomes sluggish he falls ill. Long ago, shamans knew how to reanimate a wash-basin, but since the time of the first people, when supernatural ability was common, this has been a lost art. Senile decay is attributed to listlessness of this possession.

River water, being a creation of *Ălquntām*, is akin to the water in his basin above. Boys are always advised to bathe in the river at dawn; the act is termed *ăsḵelusam*, a word connected with *nusḵelusta*. A prayer is uttered while washing. The combination of verbal appeal and the application of water strengthens the petitioner's wash-basin and so increases his chances for prosperity. Until a few years ago, this practice was almost universal. Water is always considered a strange substance, obviously a supernatural creation, and believed to be the chief means of sustenance for a child after being weaned.[39]

[39] This may be a mere rationalization.

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773 777 823 756 [755] Shamans achieve much of their success through their ability to put their wash-basins, both tangible (I, p. 560) and immaterial, in tune with *Ălquntăm*'s in the land above. One method of treating a patient is by washing, with the idea that the water and vessel used have potency through association with those in the upper world. It is believed that in the distant past, shamans were even able to carry their patients to the land above and wash them in *Ălquntăm*'s own basin. Such feats [551] are perpetuated in certain shamans' names, such as *Ălpălxeleslaix*.

773 777 It may be said in conclusion that although the Bella Coola have indefinite ideas concerning the exact form and functions of this last element, there is a firm belief that an individual's fortune in life depends upon the activity of spirit, tally post, and wash-basin. With regard to supernatural elements as a whole, it is clear that in spite of somewhat conflicting beliefs concerning the precise functions of each, they play an important part in the life of every Bella Coola.

Means of Propitiation

●782 Some of the methods employed by the Bella Coola to gain the favour of the supernatural have already been mentioned, but the subject is sufficiently important to warrant a separate section. In view of the omnipresence of supernatural beings and powers, and their influence on the lives of mortals, it is not surprising that the propitiation of them is a vital factor in human life. The chief means are prayer, sacrifice, and the observance of ceremonial chastity.

Prayer

[776] Prayers are regularly addressed to *Ălquntăm* who, in this connection, is known as *Mnukaix* or *Tătă*, both meaning, "Father." A wise man or woman desiring success in hunting, in love affairs, in the acquisition of wealth, or in any activity whatsoever, is accustomed to ask *Mnukaix* to grant his desire. No ritual is required. The petitioner merely seeks a lonely

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place where he is not likely to be disturbed, and addresses the supreme god in a loud tone of voice, requesting his assistance. [782]

Although prayers can be said at any time of the day, or at any season of the year, there are occasions when they are more potent than at other times. At dawn, for example, a wise young man is accustomed to go alone to the river to wash and pray. He enters the icy water, blows mucus over his hands, and rubs his body vigorously[11] either with a smooth pebble, or, if it can be obtained, with a stone taken from the stomach of a sea-lion.[12] As he scours himself, he asks *Minakait* to grant him long life, power, success, and strength. On coming from the water, he repeats his request, and then washes himself again. This process is repeated four times, making eight prayers in all. A young man who does this habitually, and in other ways placates the supreme deity, is likely to have success, and may even be given supernatural assistance by one of the many anthropomorphic or zoomorphic creatures. The underlying belief is that *Alquntăm* actually hears the words spoken and, pleased thereby, aids the petitioner either directly, or by strengthening the supernatural elements in his body. [783]

Minakait has power over both rain and dry weather, and is petitioned for whichever is desired. When the sun is obscured by rain clouds, the Bella Coola pray: [821]

"Please clean your face, *Minakait*," or,

"Please show us your face, we need you."

Before a man starts on a journey, either by canoe or on foot, he always asks help for his undertaking. [484]

"*Minakait*," he prays, "Be with me," or "Go before me," or, "Give me what I want."

Corresponding to the importance of the occasion, prayers are always made before the departure of a hunting or war [224] [93] [985]

[515] [296] [823] [825]

[11] Urine was formerly used for washing both the body and clothing. It was followed by the application of clean water, and undoubtedly had a religious significance; indeed, washing purely for cleanliness was not habitual until recently.

[12] The Bella Coola state that stones are often found in the stomachs of sea-lions. One specimen, considered of great value, was seen; it was indistinguishable from a water-smoothed river pebble.

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782 224 726 [715] party. Canoes always start soon after dawn, and each member of the expedition is careful to pray before leaving, and also to avoid eating in case food should in any way interfere with the success of the venture. Before reaching their destination, a chief in each canoe draws from a pouch some eagle down brought for the purpose, holds it before his mouth, and blows a little towards each of the four cardinal points, at the same time asking *Minaḵais* to smile on the enterprise and grant a safe return. This does not guarantee success, but it is felt that any disaster which may occur would have been more serious if assistance had not been thus requested.

782 776 Although *Ăĭquntăm*, under the name of *Minaḵais*, is the one to whom prayers are most often addressed, petitions are sometimes made to other beings. In the beginning of time, when Raven had superabundant power, mortals frequently sought his assistance. At the present time, he is sometimes asked for aid, in the belief that he may still have some shreds of his former power, or be in a better position than men to intercede with *Minaḵais*. If ravens croak when it is raining, people may ask them to request the supreme being to stop the rain; in such cases, a petitioner is careful to address a raven as *Newaḵila*, his title as chief, rather than as Qoax. In cold winter weather, a raven is sometimes caught alive, its head smeared with grease, and as it is released, the captor says:

782 776 825 821

"Please end the cold wind, *Newaḵila*."

982 [291] Prayers are also said half humorously, half seriously, on many occasions. When, for example, clothing has become too ragged for further use, it is thrown on a fire with the remark:

"Please come to me again, new."

The thrower does not actually believe that in so doing he is asking help from his clothing, but it gives him a certain sense of satisfaction thus to have expressed his desires.

782 424 821 The prayers above described can be said by anyone, at any time; they are means of propitiation known to the whole community. In addition, information was obtained about two prayers, each of which is the jealously guarded prerogative

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of a single family. Either is considered an almost certain means of stopping rain, but no one, even though aware of the method, can practise it with success unless he is a member of the family to which the method belongs. 782 424 821

One of these prayers, the property of a Kimsquit family, is addressed to *Xemxemälotla*. If the petitioner wishes to stop heavy rain, he goes to a quiet place in the woods and calls in a loud voice:

Áiye Xemxemälotlaᵉ,	*nuqwikdi*	*lhk*	*di sonyᵉnudx*
Hail, *Xemxemälotla*,	open	the loftiest	of your heaven
skäxyaxamdu	*dji sixwuiqwu*		*xim nänudjx.*
so that may look down	the cherished one		your child.

That is, "Expose the upper heaven so that your cherished child may look down."

It will be remembered that *Xemxemälotla* is the being who takes care of *Tläqmäk* in the upper skyland. It is said that this prayer was learnt by the ancestors of an informant in the beginning of time and that a repetition of the exact words is enough to drive away the rain clouds between earth and the upper heaven. For many generations care was taken to teach some intelligent member of the family the correct formula, and the person so entrusted was expected to use his knowledge for the benefit of any of his relatives desiring fine weather. [776]

Another prayer prerogative of similar type was recorded from an old man who related what he had seen his grandfather do many years before. The two were once hunting when heavy rain threatened their success and drove them to the shelter of a projecting ledge. The grandfather, not having any cedar-bark with him, cut and dried some evergreen boughs which he gave to his grandson, telling him to light them and wave them over his, the grandfather's, head. When this had been done, the old man rushed out into the rain and in a loud voice asked some supernatural being, whose name was forgotten, to throw his eyes upon the rain clouds in order to dispel them. That night the petitioner neither drank water nor urinated, and the [824] [785]

ᵉThe vocative form.

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782 424 821 [785] [177] next day the weather was fine. This particular method of praying had been learnt by one of his ancestors in the beginning of time, and was afterwards transmitted in his family. With the coming of the white man and consequent decay of customs, it has not been exercised since the death of the grandfather of the man from whom the information was obtained.

SACRIFICE

782 It might be expected that a clear division should be made between the subjects of prayer and sacrifice, but in practice they merge into one another. A mountain goat hunter, when camped near a glacier which he knows to be the haunt of some dreaded supernatural being, asks help from him. He wears [824] dyed and undyed cedar-bark decorations to make his request more ceremonious, and after the prayer throws them into the fire, saying:

"Please accept these, supernatural one," thus making an offering to supplement his verbal petition.

[824] [825] [261] If he is even more cautious, or eager not to offend any supernatural being in the vicinity, he throws on the fire tufts of cedar-bark, eagle down, and scraps of food as well. Whether or not the objects thus destroyed by the flames reach the being to whom the request has been made, is a matter upon which the Bella Coola do not theorize; but the generosity and self-denial of the donor is appreciated, and a favour is often granted in return. A man who frequently hears in his dreams the voice of some supernatural being, knows that it is taking an interest in his doings and endeavours to propitiate it, by placing on a fire titbits of any food he has obtained, saying at the same time:

"*Wai, wai, wai,*" "More, more, more," that is, "May I receive more of the same."

A foolish person fails to show his appreciation of favours received, but a wise man never forgets to do so.

[502] [133] [756] Likewise a person is careful to propitiate supernatural powers when in peril. Both at Kwatna and at Menatche Nose,

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the point between Labouchere Channel and Dean Inlet Arm, there is danger from treacherous currents, so, when a shaman passes either of those places, he lays some food on the water and puffs eagle down into the air as he asks for help. If no shaman is in the canoe, this is done by the captain.

The being to whom offerings are most commonly made is *Thixtpiliits-a*, the supernatural woman who cures the sick and gives power to shamans. Whenever a hunter kills an edible animal in the forest, he cuts off four pieces of flesh and throws them into his fire to gain her goodwill. Long, long ago, *Thixtpiliits-a* appeared to a hunter, seized some of his quarry, and told him of her wishes with regard to presents; these have since been obeyed by wise people. Similarly, the relatives of a man absent in the mountains or at sea throw scraps of food on the fire and ask the protection of *Thixtpiliits-a* for the one in danger. In this case, it is clear that objects thrown into flames are received and appreciated by *Thixtpiliits-a*.

Masalaic, although usually propitiated by prayer, is also given presents. Frequently, when a man is praying, he accompanies his words by blowing up into the air small particles of eagle down. Prayers in connection with the departure of war or hunting expeditions have already been mentioned, but before starting on any journey by canoe, the captain is careful to pray and to throw upon the water four pieces of red, and four of yellow cedar-bark. The blowing upwards of eagle down is a common accompaniment to all kinds of prayers, but, if none is available, cedar-bark can be used equally satisfactorily. If possible, this is cast on the surface of water, otherwise into a fire, as a request is being made. The Bella Coola do not believe that such presents are actually used and considered valuable by *Masalaic*, but they emphasize and accompany the vocal prayer, and demonstrate the petitioner's sincerity.

Ghosts, on the other hand, depend almost entirely on presents given them by mortals, since food is not abundant in the land below. The relatives of a dead person always throw

small particles of food on a fire; these become large when they reach the land below and nourish the ghosts. An individual making an offering of this kind says:

"*Ānukūlāwas ānukus,*" "This is to make weight your road, beloved one."

The needs and desires of ghosts have been made known to mortals through visits paid by shamans to the land below, and by the coming of ghosts to this world. It is, therefore, realized that food placed on the ground does not reach the land below, but that morsels thrown on a fire sink through into the abode of ghosts. Offerings to the dead are not made with the hope of receiving favours from them, but rather to provide beloved relatives with necessary food and to prevent them from showing displeasure by causing stomach aches and other ailments.

Other instances, both of prayer and of sacrifice, will be recorded in connection with various myths. The salient feature is that the Bella Coola are able to gain, by such means, the favour of supernatural beings, a factor which plays an important part in their daily life. In addition, they have a large number of practices based on sympathetic magic. No absolutely rigid boundary line can be drawn between the latter and religious prayer, but there is a fairly clear division between rites such as those just described, in which propitiation is the important element, and others in which the desired end follows the mere performance of a certain act. Customs of this last type will be reserved for later consideration (vol. I, chap. xv).

THE OBSERVANCE OF CEREMONIAL CLEANLINESS

In addition to prayer and sacrifice, the *Bella Coola* have yet another means of obtaining the goodwill of supernatural beings, and at the same time of strengthening their own supernatural attributes so that good fortune is likely to ensue. This is by the practice of certain ceremonial cleanings, of which the basis is that a man must not hold intercourse except after certain periods of continence. To understand this, it is neces-

A man may receive as many prerogatives with regard to house painting that he has to continue the designs on the sides of his dwelling, or he may receive as many figures for a totem pole that he can erect one of composite pattern. X may acquire prerogatives not only from his father-in-law, but from his mother-in-law, and if he is the husband of several wives, the family of each may contribute something. If, for some inexplicable reason, X is not given any prerogative from the family of his wife, he uses one of his own ancestral myths with the names belonging thereto. A man who gives many potlatches can choose to cultivate numerous family names for himself, or to concentrate on one alone, elevating it to a position of great importance. But any names he cultivates must belong to his family; it is contrary to custom for a Bella Coola to steal a name to which he has no right.

At this, or some other suitable time, X prays for assistance in the complicated rites that are to follow. Taking four pieces of pounded and dyed cedar-bark, and four pieces of undyed bark, he pinches off such a small quantity of food and throws the eight into the fire. Likewise he may throw in four small pieces of any kind of goods. As he does so he appeals to the supreme god:

"Please strengthen my spirit for the many duties which are before me."

Instead of praying himself, X may ask a chanter to do so for him, in the belief that the latter's supplication will be more efficacious.

The necessity for supernatural assistance lies in the fact that any serious error or disaster in the performance of potlatch rites calls for summary punishment, since X has allowed supernatural *sonat* knowledge to reach the uninitiated. In such a case the duty of meting out a penalty falls upon the members of a benign tribe. Nothing is said at the time, but the departing guests take away with them information of what has happened. Great latitude is allowed as to who shall be the chastisers. The guests may be related to X and the members

or a ghost, he informs a shaman of the fact and the latter notifies the relatives of the deceased. If no shaman is convenient, the sheila does not hesitate to help himself. Invisible, and armed with a barbed hook, he approaches a person who is eating and pulls away a crumb which falls to the earth. Should the eater stoop to pick this up, the ghost, robbed of its booty, hooks the offender with his hook, causing toothache or sometimes a sharp pain in the head or stomach. Other ailments are caused by the ghosts biting with invisible crows those who have offended them. Consequently, no one picks up a crumb which has fallen, since it is impossible to know whether it has been an accident or a seizure. Another indication of a ghost's hunger is loss of a tooth. The loser should throw it on a fire with an invitation to the dead to accept his offering.

The barrier between ghosts and human beings is considered to be little more than a wall of smoke, just too dense for ordinary eyes to penetrate. In early times intercommunication between the denizens of the two worlds was so easy that a dying mother was once allowed to send her dead child to earth. Unfortunately, the woman's mother one day insisted on holding her grandchild, unaware that he was a ghost. Shocked at his appearance, the old woman dropped the child, much to the anger of the dead people.[1] Ever since that time it has been impossible for human beings to see and talk with their deceased kinsmen. Like so many Bella Coola stories, it is doubtful whether this one is regarded as more than an item of ancient history; it is considered to be a fact, but it is not one that enters into the daily thoughts of the people.

Ghosts frequently come to their old homes at night where dogs can see them. If one of these animals begins to howl and gazes fixedly at a spot where nothing is to be seen, it is because a wraith is standing there and the dog's owner hopes that it will remain invisible. It is true that some individuals have received shamanistic power from a ghost, but more often a visitation is disastrous and to be avoided. A dead person often

[1] For story a version is cited (see p. 99).

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power in this way, but our type can be judged by the shamanistic performances hereafter described, many of which are believed to have been derived from them. 756 787 [78]

The members of different families have remembered various means of making a person "clean" so that a supernatural being is likely to visit him. Almost every family knows one or more of these, and an individual who shows signs of becoming a shaman will be taught how to use his family method. In connection with this, the seeker after power will further purify himself by abstaining from sexual intercourse, by frequent washing in hot springs, by eating small portions of the tails of snakes and the heads of owls, and by avoiding food prepared by a widow or by a girl secluded after puberty. In this way he hopes that his dreams will be fruitful, and that a vision may be granted him as he lies on the forest on his evergreen couch. 756 769 787 [785]

The following are some of the methods to be practised at dawn every fourth day.

(a) The seeker after power locates a small stream on either side of which there are growing two shoots of devil's club. At dawn he breaks off the four stems and strips from them the bark, which he uses to wash himself in the cold water. As he does so he says:

"Please give me power that I may see what I wish to see."

This is addressed to no plant itself, nor to the supreme god. It is a request to be able to see some one of the many supernatural beings that roam the forests, but which are invisible, to appear only to animals, to all but shamans. The words are not a fixed formula, and similar ones are said in connection with each method. After washing, the seeker for power throws the bark and peeled stems into the water. [782]

(b) Again selecting a secluded stream, the would-be shaman picks up a smooth, water-worn pebble from one side of it, and with this rubs his body, then carefully replaces it in the exact position from which he took it. He repeats the process with a second stone, crosses the stream and does likewise with two stones from the further margin.

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755 offender. A shaman is able to diagnose the malady, and when
4 756 he has pulled it forth in the manner previously described, he
[825] ties it up in a bundle of four pieces of dyed, and four of undyed, cedar-bark, sprinkles eagle down over the whole, and throws it into the river. This not only causes the sickness to return whence it has come, but placates the salmon who are glad to receive the beautiful cedar-bark.

755 (6) Another method is by making a present to *Tlindp-*
9 756 *lidze a*. The shaman prepares four collars of hemlock twigs,
782 wrapped around with alternate bands of dyed and undyed cedar-bark, and with numerous cross-pieces of dyed cedar-bark. When these are ready, all assemble to witness the curing, and to assist the practitioner by beating sticks. He first sets four basins, one at each corner of the fire, and then proceeds to pull it apart, leaving a glowing expanse of embers in the centre. The shaman throws on this bed pieces of dyed and undyed cedar-bark, as well as eagle down, and walks through, between the two halves of the separated fire. Several men stated that they had seen this done, but none could give any information as to the method. If actually carried out, the way in which the fire was prevented from burning the shaman and the highly inflammable bark and eagle down has been lost.

[789] The shaman himself now guides the beating of sticks. When the tumult has reached its height he goes to the patient and places over his head one of the collars, passing it right down over his body, breaking the cross strings of dyed cedar-bark as he does so. The patient rises and the shaman picks up the collar from beneath his feet; his body has thus passed entirely through it. The sick man then revolves once, sunwise, while the shaman carries the collar once, sunwise, around the fire. He then stills the beating of sticks, which has been going on throughout, and casts the circlet on the fire. The same procedure is repeated with the three remaining collars. It is believed that these offerings reach *Tlindpilidze a* who, pleased to

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receive such pretty objects, restores the sick, though she does not herself come to do so.

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The shaman now sends a young man out to fill his curing basin. When this is done, he carries it around the fire, once, sunwise, and sets it down beside the patient. The practitioner drinks from it, and casts some eagle down on the surface. If it revolves sunwise, it signifies that the patient will soon recover, and the shaman proceeds to wash him with the water; if it remains stationary or revolves in the opposite direction, it is an unfavourable sign, and he throws the water out of the door. More is then brought, and the procedure repeated until it revolves sunwise. Although no Bella Coola can state definitely how this is performed, the consensus of opinion is that it is done by twisting the box slightly.

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Shamans are not the only ones who make offerings to *Tsimsyēlēlē·a*. It is generally known that she likes to receive things, so a sick person often throws on the fire a little grease, some of his own clothing, or other objects of small value. By so doing he hopes that she may appear, or that the sickness will vanish as the object is consumed in the flames. A person in good health sometimes makes like offerings, either on the central house fire or on one built behind the house, at the same time asking *Tsimsyēlēlē·a* to help guard him.

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(v) In recent years some shamans have been in the habit of displaying the sickness in visible form; this is said to have been a practice adopted from the Bella Bella. After throwing himself on top of the patient the shaman sucks violently, and produces such an object as a toad, a snail, or a stick of wood, which he claims to have been the cause of the malady. This has, of course, been concealed throughout in his mouth. This belief is fostered by the undoubted skill of some shamans in extracting such foreign substances as a salmon bone, wedged in a patient's throat, or a sliver. In such cases he first works with his fingers to force the object near the surface. It is believed that some shamans are so powerful they can draw forth foreign substances by the mere application of their stick

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mouth, and the malady departed. It had been absorbed into the stick, and later driven from it by the shaman's breath.

This man made a great reputation for himself with his ability to hang from his small stick. On one occasion, after fishing on the lower Fraser River, he was encamped on the ocean beach near Seattle, where he had gone to pick hops. Four white men who had heard of his powers came to his tent for a demonstration. He put on his robes, took his small stick from his lore, and used the ridge pole of his tent as the heavier horizontal one. The white men examined the small stick and found nothing peculiar about it. The man performed his dance, in the course of it throwing the small stick up against the ridge pole, where it remained suspended with the actor hanging from it. After releasing his hold, he struck the smaller stick a slight blow with his hand and it at once came away from the ridge pole.

As already mentioned, it is extremely difficult to obtain accounts of dreams which have served as sources for shamanistic performances. They are unconsciously embellished by the performer to such an extent that the ritual displayed has probably slight resemblance to the vision on which it is based.

The following, however, is an example of the type that could have served as theme. A man once dreamed that he saw Mount *Nusqulc* with its rocks adorned with handsome pictures. The other mountains of the valley were also discovered, but none of them was so fine. If he had had the desire and the necessary wealth he could have arranged with the carpenters to have the designs that he saw in his dream painted, and could have displayed them as a shaman's vision.

A shaman, particularly one who has received a vision from *Tlēxpēlūlē·c*, and who has had marked success both in curing the sick and in giving conjuring exhibitions, is considered to be in peculiarly close association with supernatural beings. Accordingly, he is regarded as a fit person to ask their assistance, not that he has any means of gaining help that are not open to others, but merely that his greater acquaintance with

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them renders it more likely that they will grant his requests. Therefore, a shaman is usually called upon to perform the following rites:

(1) Washing the mouth of a person who has died without voiding from his body the first salmon or olachen of the season (I, p. 436).

(2) Asking assistance for the complicated rites of the potlatch (I, p. 191).

(3) Request for assistance before starting on a journey, by pulling eagle down into the air (I, p. 106).

(4) Request for aid by means of placing food on the water and blowing eagle down into the air at Measachie Nose and Kwazna (I, p. 109).

In fact a supplication to any supernatural being can be made with greater prospect of success by a shaman than by any other person.

The Power of Shamans

As has been said, a shaman actually has power within himself, and this is so strong that it may be a source of danger to others. If a man should pass behind one so endowed when the latter is eating, his spirit would be drawn from his body into the shaman's mouth, which would close with a click, crushing the spirit and killing the man. This is quite invariably the part of the shaman. It happened more than once among the early inhabitants, and since that time people have been very careful not to pass behind an eating shaman. This taboo was still in force until about 1885. A shaman, too, is said to be able to recall a spirit which has left its body, and thus cure ill. It is believed by some that shamans can see the position of a person's ruly pole, and so judge the length of his life. These examples show the varying beliefs of different Bella Coola concerning the powers of shamans.

But the force within the shaman is really more dangerous to its possessor than to others. As certain "unclean" objects are able to subdue supernatural beings, so do these same ob-

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called out to him, and then remembers no more. It was obvious that she had seen a ghost.

It is over diseases caused by ghosts that a shaman from the dead has power. If a person picks up and eats any morsels which he has dropped he will usually suffer, because, though he thinks the crumbs have fallen, they have really been pulled from his hands by a hungry ghost, who thus showed his desire for food. By picking up and eating these fragments, the man thwarts a dead person who retaliates by forcing some sickness into him. Ghosts may visit this land of the living and ask their relatives for food or clothing, but mortals, unable to hear the speech of the dead, are unaware of the requests of their deceased relatives, and so do not answer them. The irritated ghosts respond by causing sickness. In such cases a shaman from the dead is able to suck out the cause of the ill, and sometimes to display it as a bone, twig, or other small object and at the same time to tell the sufferer what was that his relatives desired. Like ordinary shamans, shaman from the dead uses his own discretion whether or not to employ the violent beating of sticks, and like his fellow-practitioner receives payment from those whom he has helped. There are no fixed charges, but a successful shaman is always wealthy.

The intimate contact of ghosts with shamans has already been mentioned in connection with the ability of the latter to learn from the ghost of a murdered man whom he believes to be his slayer.

There is one method of sacrificial giving practised by shamans from the dead alone. If the patient refuses to yield to ordinary methods, the practitioner takes ten cedar-bark vessels, fills them with grease and places them near the fire, one between it and the door, one on the other side, and four on either side of it, parallel to the side wall of the house. By each vessel are placed two small wooden figures, roughly carved to represent men, and decorated with dyed and undyed cedar-bark. After endeavouring to suck forth the disease, with or without the assistance of the frenzied beating of sticks, the

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shaman pours the grease on the central fire, and throws on it also the figures and some dried salmon. Thus propitiated, it is believed that the dead will be more likely to allow the sickness to be sucked forth.

Shamans from the dead perform conjuring feats and dramatic performances of the same type as ordinary shamans. Until he gives his first dance a newly created shaman is known as a *lsux*, the same word that is used for a *kusiut* initiate, and during this period he wears the shaman's collar of intertwined dyed and undyed cedar-bark. If he is wealthy and influential, a shaman will repeat his dance every fourth year. Such a performance can be held at any season, although the usual time is after the *kusiut* ceremonies. The dramatic representations are of scenes witnessed in the land below, though sometimes they are done in a reverse manner, following the practice of the dead in doing things strangely. Thus one shaman reported that the ghosts wore very long blankets, but when he danced he wore one that came only to his hips. The method of singing is the same as that employed by ordinary shamans, but one whose power is derived from the dead dances with head bent downwards, his free hand pointing to the ground with first finger extended. Also his cry of "*ewai, ewai, ewai,*" uttered at intervals with a deep cadence, differs from that used by ordinary shamans. A dance always terminates with the distribution of food to validate the ceremony.

Like ordinary shamans, those from the dead cannot transmit their power. At death their songs too are lost, unless they choose to give them to a friend who is also a shaman from the dead. This is obviously contrary to the theoretical belief that all songs have been obtained during revelations, but is not at all contrary to the Bella Coola practice of having the singers assist the visionaries in "remembering" their visions.

The following tale, although drawn from the distant past, is a typical illustration of one of the many ways in which shamanistic power is received from the dead.*

* A few stories of similar type have been included in vol. I, chap. VIII to explain the life of the dead, and others are grouped together in the next chapter.

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About half a mile from the glacier there is a large rock shelter where mountain goat hunters are wont to smoke their meat. They are always careful to take with them dyed and undyed cedar-bark and eagle down, knowing that they may encounter the supernatural. Sometimes they hear the voice of *sxpɬam*, a deep, long drawn-out hum, *m*——. If this sound is repeated four times it is a happy augury, but if heard only once it presages ill fortune. In either case some member of the party, one who is ceremonially clean and is brave, blackens his face, puts on a collar of dyed cedar-bark, covered with eagle down, steps outside, and says in effect:

"Hail! Petrified One. In the beginning you came down from *Alqustăw*, from all that was wonderful and powerful. You have not changed, hence we mortals can still hear your voice. Please, may it be well with us. There is none other like you."

If the supplicant is ceremonially clean the mountain will answer *hi*——, four times, and there will be heard what sounds like a great landslide. Then the petitioner takes some small portions of meat, some dyed and some undyed cedar-bark, and eagle down and throws them on the fire.

"Please accept, Oh *Kaxiaw*" (Powerful One), he says.

Thus propitiated, *sxpɬam* grants them success in hunting.

(13) *Xpipiɬtsăn i*: On the south side of the Dean River about one mile from its mouth. Here, in the beginning of time, Raven cast his war-knife, *cpăs*, which was turned to stone and can still be seen. Its power has likewise become localized at this point.

(14) In the beginning of time Mount *Swaly*, near the Dean River, was a man who was turned to stone. Across the river is his wife, *Ăɬsalxwăl*, whose ancestral name is *Kamilkăs*, likewise petrified.

In most of these places a sick person can receive assistance, if he is willing to risk the consequent dangers. The first essential is that he be in a "clean" condition by the observance of

[Loc. - certain spots where power is localized - see ant. 116, pp 594-600 for their location - Ann'ty?]

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[The Dance of Wi'.a]

The last to seat himself is *Kwâlas Nuxkämpts*, an obstreperous individual, who always wants more presents than anyone else. When X announces that the beings above have taken their places, a carpenter brings forward the object covered with cedar-bark and painted with a design of *Xemxemälsts*,[*] holds it above X's head, and then gives it to a herald who casts it into the fire. At the same time X throws on the flames some dyed cedar-bark, some undyed cedar-bark, a little eagle down, and some olachen grease, saying:

"Please *Xemxemälsts*,[*] accept this offering and be present," and throws his hands up in the air as if casting some object upwards.

Still dancing, X calls out *hoip* several times.

The painted representation and the cedar-bark are objects which *Xemxemälsts* likes to receive; the olachen grease supplies the flame on which they ascend to him. The same procedure is repeated for the eight other brothers, with slight variations in the words addressed to each. To *Omqemälilds*, for example, X says:

Ai-ipaxl mxnhalmx	*dxemxemxemxemxemxemx*	*nxqaxemx-mxk*
Wemlqmxkm-xnkemxl[*]	is the place where he sits,	the recipient,[*]
hemqemälilkmxk		
Omqemälilds.[*]		

When the time comes to invite the hungry *Tlätqalilds*, an offering of food instead of bark is cast upon the flames. X continues to dance after the final gift, and presently a thud is heard on the roof while some *hoiist*, chosen beforehand for the purpose, compresses a hidden bladder-whistle which the uninitiated know is the voice of the evil. Whether they be-

[*] In Kimsquit the offerings are made by a herald who has this prerogative in connection with the game *Hahlhaam-a*.

[*] The other name is *Tsi-ipaxm*, "The Recipient of Many Gifts."

[*] *Ayaxl* also is one of the longer woodpeckers, the species could not be identified.

[*] This designation, properly applied only to *Xemxemälsts*, is often used for his brothers as well.

[*] These words are clinically sung, each vertical line marking the end of each subdivision. A record was made of the music for the National Museum of Canada; record VII D 6a; singer, Jim Pollard.

APPENDIX D

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awaas, awaitx, awaxstas: Member of same sex and same exogamic family as speaker.
Nankilum: Supernatural being who comes with *Nankyaxa* to bring a call to the latter's protégé.
Nanukulamut: One of the names of Great Blue Heron as chief.
nemit: 1—A passage, especially the digestive tract.
2—Laudatory adjective applied to chiefs, referring to goods distributed.
nemtemaxlas: Toilet-hole.
nemlaxtmas: Recompense, virtually pay, given to carpenters and other craftsmen at a mourning ceremony.
nemxwlaxtmas: Exchange marriage.
nempaklitmas: Passenger.
Ne-mi: Place near *Nalkun*.
Nemkumlalis: Ancient name created by *nyaqaya* at Kimsquit in the beginning of time.
nemmat di mimas: Half-brother or sister with different mother from speaker.
nemmat ni mimas: Half-brother or sister with different father from speaker.
Nemsemlex, "The Inhospitable One": Name taken by a wife in consequence of slights received from her husband's relatives.
Nemtetmamuk: One of the four supernatural eagle-like creatures.
Nemtlqinem: Supernatural being who created copartners in the beginning of time.
Nemtlutsuk: One of the four supernatural eagle-like creatures.
Nemtsimem: House occupied by the four sisters at *Nemqamk* in the beginning of time.
nem-t'emut: The use of potent medicines after seeing a ghost vomit.
nemxwmimas or *nemxlmimasmut*: 1—The giving of hemlock-bark and dried cedar-bark to *Nemqamk*ex.
2—The making of offerings to ghosts by the casting of food on a fire.

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Nemxwsak: One of the four supernatural eagle-like creatures.
Nemxwtsilalmut: Male supernatural being who travels with *Nankyaxa*, takes charge of the singers who also accompany him, and sometimes denies happily.
Nemxwtsis: Mother *Nemxwa*.
nemxyay: Fishermen with inherited right to use of a salmon-weir or of a place for catching shellfish.
nemxyemxwtsilis, "A Calling Back", or "A Saving": Term applied to the death of a chief in the belief that it is due to the supernatural creatures having come down to carry him off. The word is often added to their designation.

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Nemxyemxyil, "Where Wrens Entered": House of one of the four groups of workers at Kimsquit in the beginning of time.
Nemxyemxyilaxa: Ancient name of a Bella Coola man.
Nemxyemxyilaxyaxa or *Nemxyemxyilaxyaxa*: Ptolemaized name of a female dancer.
Nemxyemxyimas: Supernatural being; this is probably a synonym for one of the Carpenters.
Nemxyilaxa: Ancient name of a Bella Coola man.
Nemxyimamuk: One of the four supernatural eagle-like creatures.
Nemxyimmalik: Kimsquit human mentioned in an ancient story.
Nemxyilmenem, "The One that Penetrates to the Head of the River": Supernatural name of northern salmon.

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what cause this divergence is due. Mythology and religion are so closely connected that a few words on the former must be added here. The principal deity of the Bilqula is Sun, the sun-god (compare sing. sun). The rays of the sun are his symbolism. When prayed to he is called Tsul'xa. In praying the Bilqula look heavenward. I obtained the following formulæ: *Alkaxa alkilaxq, Tsul'xa,* 'Look on us when we are crying, Tsul'xa;' and *Tsul'xa, axkaitsnemkilq,* 'Take care of us, Tsul'xa.' Sun is pre-eminently the ruler of the world, and does not interfere with the actions and thoughts of men. These are given by Hamamkilq. According to the tradition of the Bilqula, before the liberation of the sun, and before the world was made as it is nowadays, four deities lived on the earth: Hamamkilq, Tsul'xtsnet, Skaiqa'xqaxk, and Xil'xilx'kik. The raven wished to obtain the sun, but he was unable to liberate it. Then he went to these deities and asked their help. They ascended to the sky, and tore the curtain, which up to that time had been suspended between heaven and earth, hiding the heavenly orbs. The sun appeared, but he shone dimly, as though darkened by clouds. The raven ascended to heaven through the rift made by Hamamkilq, and found there a beautiful prairie country in which all the birds lived. Hamamkilq and his brethren painted them beautifully and sent them down to earth, giving each his song and his note. The raven was not content with the sun, and resolved to try and find a better one. He flew to the house of a great chief, who kept the *sasq'wats* (ye-deeplane of, sq'wa-ehe day is dawning). The *sasq'wats* was a small round receptacle closed all around like an egg. The chief guarded it jealously, and kept it suspended from one of the rafters of his house. The raven knew that he could not obtain it by sheer force, and resorted to a ruse. He assumed the shape of the leaf of a spruce tree, and let himself drop into the pond from which the chief's daughter used to take water. The girl dipped from the pool, swallowed the leaf, and thus became with child. She gave birth to a boy, who was the raven himself. The old chief loved the boy dearly, and allowed him to play with the *sasq'wats*. This was what he desired. He ran out of the house, broke it, and flew away in the shape of a raven.

After the sun had thus been obtained Hamamkilq said: 'Let us make men.' He made the image of a man out of wood, but he was unable to endow it with breath. Skaiqa'xqaxk and Xil'xilx'kik could likewise in vain fashion figures and to give them life, but they failed. Finally, Tsul'xtsnet carved the figure of a man and endowed it with life. He made a man and a woman in each country, and they became the ancestors of all the numerous tribes. Then Hamamkilq gave them their arts. He taught them to build canoes, to catch animals, to build houses. He made rivers everywhere, that men should have water to drink, and that the fish might go up the rivers to be caught by men.

The Bilqula believe that Hamamkilq and his brethren still continue to give new ideas to men. They say that any new design of painting or carving, or any other new invention made by a member of their tribe, has been given to him by Hamamkilq.

The religious side of the potlatch and of the secret societies has been referred to above.

The soul is believed to dwell in the eggs. It is similar in shape to a bird inclosed in an egg. If the shell of the egg breaks and the soul flies away the owner must die. Diseases are also to be cured by removing souls.

white crane (?). Qā'oxts, is sitting on top of the post. The master of the house is Sxaxs, the Sun. He is also called Ta'ats ("our father"), or Sxaxā'yaxkila ("the sacred one"), or Sxaxyakit'ca.la. It seems that he is the only deity to whom the Bella Coola pray. They do not pray to Qaxsā'xts, the deity of the supreme heaven. I have not found any prayers directed to the other deities of the lower heavens. I recorded a number of such prayers directed to the Sun. They are as follows:—

Ack'ā'xtā'cmx Ta'ats! ("Look on us where we are going, Father!")

Ta'ats! ack'ā'xc cmxā'ca! ("Take care of us, Father!")

Ta'ats! ck'ā'xcmxā'ca ck'ā'xcmxā'ca! Ta'ats! cmxā'xlmxcmx! ("Father! take care of our road! Take care of us!")

After a long-continued rain, they pray:—

Tcqāx'mx Ta'ats! kēx'ā'lxcmxā'ca, Ta'ats! ("Wipe your face, Father! that it may be fair weather.")

The mountain-goat hunter prays:—

Ōmqx yāxmtmx, Ta'ats', ta xcxmx'xmxā, Sxaxyakit'ca! ("Let your children look at us, Sxaxyakit'a, Father!")

A person pursued by misfortune prays:—

Sxaxyakit'cmx Ta'ats! cmxqxmxā'xcmx ō qāxqxcxcmxmxā'c. ("Take me happy, Father! You have given me too much misfortune.")

A sick person prays:—

Sxaxyakit'cmx Ta'ats! ck'ā'cmxlxmxā'xcmx Ta'ats! ("Let my life be long, Father!")

The successful hunter, or the woman who has found a plentiful supply of berries, prays:—

Sxaxyakit'ā'xcmx ō cmxā'xlmx ck'ā'cmxlxmxā'xcmx ck'ā'c yāxtcx cmxā'k'cmxā'xcmx ck'ā'cmxlxmxā'xcmx ō cqāxtcā'xcmx. ("Father! You make me happy. You give me what I desire. Thus I find what I wished for.")

The Bella Coola also make offerings to the Sun. Hunters throw four small pieces of meat, of mountain-goat tallow, etc., into the fire as an offering to the Sun, in order to obtain success in hunting. Sick people burn parts of their clothing, which they decorate with red cedar-bark, as an offering to regain health.

The second deity, who is called Ack'ā'xmā'ca, seems to be of equal importance. Sxaxs and Ack'ā'xmā'ca stay in the room of the House of Mythology. Near the fire stays Sxaxā'xlxā'ca. He is an old man who formerly ruled over

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contradiction is inherent in all the mythologies of the North Pacific coast, they nowhere reach such a degree as among the Bella Coola; and I presume the fact that the traditions are kept secret by the various families accounts for this curious condition.

The prayers of the Bella Coola directed to Snaw or Ts'ists bear a remarkable resemblance to the prayers of the Tsimshian addressed to Laxha, the sky. In both tribes we find the idea that when the Sun wipes his face it will be clear weather, and men will be happy; consequently the prayer to the deity "to wipe his face" occurs quite often.

One of the most important customs that the Bella Coola borrowed from the Coast tribes is the kl'ixut ceremonial, with which are connected the various secret societies, particularly the custom of ceremonial cannibalism. The ceremonies and the paraphernalia used by the Bella Coola and by the Kwakiutl are practically identical. I told above (p. 32) the legend explaining the origin of cannibalism. Among the Bella Bella and Kwakiutl, another tradition is told to explain the origin of this custom. The tradition tells of a spirit called Baxbakualanuxsiwae, who lives in the forest, and who initiates the members of the Cannibal Society. The series of traditions clustering around this being differ fundamentally from those referring to the Cannibal Society of the Bella Coola. The custom has also spread to the Tsimshian, who say that the secret societies were introduced by a hunter who was taken into the inside of a cliff by a white bear. Inside he saw a house, in which the various societies were performing their ceremonies. It appears, therefore, that the same ritual which is practised by three distinct tribes is explained by three fundamentally distinct myths; and we must conclude that in this case the ritual is older than the myth,—that the latter has been invented in order to explain customs that were borrowed from foreign tribes, so that the ritual is the primary phenomenon, while the myth is secondary.[1]

These considerations explain some of the psychological motives for the development of certain traditions and myths, as well as the curious inconsistency of the clan traditions of the Bella Coola. They do not, however, explain the most fundamental characteristic of the traditions of the tribe. I pointed out in the third chapter of this paper, that, notwithstanding the numerous contradictions contained in family legends, the conception of the world and the functions of the various deities are so well defined that we must consider the mythology of this tribe vastly superior to that of the neighboring tribes. While the latter believe in a great many spirits which are not coordinated, we have here a system of deities. The existence of a systematic mythology among the Bella Coola proves that under favorable conditions the advance from the lowest forms of beliefs to higher forms may be a very rapid one.

[1] See Report of the U. S. National Museum for 1895, pp. 641 ff.